

# **How the Lincoln Police Department Has Contributed to Falling Crime Rates**

## ***We have been productive***

Traffic citations have increased by 30% in the past decade, felony arrests by 43%, drunk driving arrests by 63%, and drug arrests by 96%. Our productivity is vastly outstripping both population growth and the number of police officers.

## ***We have been proactive***

We have not waited for emerging problems to become crises. We got out in front of gang problems early by developing a written Gang Strategy in 1994 that has helped us reduce the impact of gangs in Lincoln. Similarly, we have implemented prevention projects to reduce the impact of thefts from autos, thefts of metals, gun violence, and methamphetamine labs. We have done long-term analyses, projections based on historical data, and maintained a strategic plan to identify and respond to future conditions.

## ***We have been problem solvers***

We haven't just responded to individual incidents after the fact, rather we have worked on underlying problems that threaten safety, security, and quality of life in the community. We have done this by researching, designing, and implementing over 100 problem-oriented policing projects every year. We created and we have led a City-wide Problem Resolution Team for the past decade.

## ***We have been relentless***

We have consistently maintained a significantly higher crime clearance rate than the national average. We have maintained a rigorous system for tracking follow-up and for reviewing investigative reports to insure quality and completeness. We have solved complex crimes that in many jurisdictions would have quickly been pushed to the back of the file cabinet, even after several years' investigation, like the murders of Tammy Martin, Michael Schmader, Duane Johnson, and Harold Fowler. We have paid particular attention to drug crimes. We developed the State's first multi-agency drug task force. We have concentrated on complex conspiracy cases and high-level dealers, leading the State in Federal indictments for drug conspiracies.

## ***We have taken care of the small stuff***

We have thoroughly embraced the "broken windows" theory of crime: taking care of lower-level offenses and disorder as a strategy to reduce and prevent more serious crimes. We have increased misdemeanor arrests by 47% in the past decade. We make a huge number of these arrests—25,998 in 2006. We have aggressively gone after street prostitution and public order crimes like disturbing the peace, maintaining a disorderly house, alcohol-related offenses. We issued 105,843 traffic tickets last year.

## ***We have targeted our resources***

We have earned a national—even international—reputation for our work in crime analysis, especially geographic crime analysis and the use of crime mapping technology. We have developed expertise in detecting hotspots and focusing our limited resources on the locations with the most significant problems and at the right times. We have deployed our personnel and developed our work schedules based on careful analysis of time of day, day of week, and location of incidents and the demand for police services.

## ***We have leveraged technology***

We have developed in-house one of the most complete and functional police information systems in the nation. We have deployed a mobile data network, geographic information systems, web

conferencing, computer forensic analysis, and a police intranet—all without consultants. We have provided our officers with unparalleled access to our information resources. We have also created excellent resources for the general public to get key information on our Internet site, especially for landlords, neighborhood associations, volunteer coordinators, and employers who need to keep track of crime in their area, or do background research on their applicants and prospective tenants. We have implemented Automated Fingerprint Identification, Rapid Brass Identification, video enhancement, and digital mug shots, to provide faster and more accurate identification.

### ***We have collaborated with others***

We have worked with a huge number of partners to maintain and improve the quality of life in Lincoln, such as *Free to Grow*, *NU directions*, the N. 27th Street and University Place redevelopment projects, the *Lincoln Public Schools*, the *Family Violence Council*, the *Child Advocacy Center*, *Project Safe Neighborhoods*, the *Downtown Lincoln Association*, and our six community advisory councils, to name a few.

### ***We have been accountable***

We have regularly reviewed our progress with a detailed monthly statistical report for the department, and individual monthly productivity reports for officers. We have reviewed our budget targets bi-weekly, and our fuel usage monthly. We have conducted a detailed annual workload analysis for each unit. We have conducted an annual comparison of our department to all other cities of similar size and all other cities in our region on key performance indicators. We have maintained scrupulous systems of accountability for our individual performance as police employees. We have conducted monthly ACUDAT meetings for the past decade to review our most recent crime statistics, discuss our current crime trends, and to develop strategies.

### ***We have been efficient***

We have operated under budget for 12 consecutive years, after a decade of running in the red. We have dramatically reduced overtime costs beginning in 1996. We have delivered our services at a very low per capita cost, with the smallest police force in the State and one of the smallest in the area. We rank as the 177th smallest police force of the 192 cities in Nebraska and all surrounding States, right between Hays, Kansas and Lee's Summit, Missouri. Only one other city of over 200,000 is in the bottom half—Colorado Springs, at 97th. We would have to add 118 police officers to our force of 317 in order to be the same size per capita as Colorado Springs.